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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses communication education in the past, present, and future. Communication education is discussed in each time period in terms of who the learners are, who the teachers are, what concepts are being taught or emphasized, how the concepts are taught, and in what contexts the instruction occurs. These components are also considered against the motifs of education and society, i.e., the values, beliefs, and goals that dominate the social and political institutions and inter-relate with the educational systems of the time. It is concluded that in the future, the most profound impact on society and education will be the advent of the learning society, one in which the emphasis will be on practical experience with time off for working before, during, or after schooling. It is further concluded that the profession of speech communication will probably be a prominent force in the twenty-first century. (TS)

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COMMUNICATION EDUCATION: SOME POSSIBLE FUTURES

by

Barbara Lieb-Brilhart*

In this bicentennial year, institutions, professions and individuals are acutely aware of the past. The speech communication profession and its allied fields are no exceptions. In fact, the theme of the 1976 SCA convention will be "check-up," an attempt to make us aware of our professional goals and the extent to which we appear to be accomplishing them. One of the notable aspects of this bicentennial has been the attention to "implications for the future," a result, no doubt, of the impact of futuristic movements on contemporary education. In keeping with the spirit of the bicentennial, I would like to review with you today some of the current trends in communication education as these have emerged from the past and as they are likely to modify and be modified by events of the future.

But first let me say that to discuss communication education today may seem like an attempt to discuss the universe. For we are in an era of applications of communication knowledge to institutions and problems in all contexts and at all levels of contemporary society.

We are also in an era where the methodologies of many well-established disciplines are being applied to the study of human communication. For example, a recent book of readings edited by Budd and Ruben[1] includes anthropology, art, biology, philosophy, economics, history (and finally, speech), among its approaches to human communication. In a sense, communication studies, whether or not they yet constitute a discipline, have become a focal point for the physical and social sciences, the arts and humanities. In another sense, the

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methodologies of communication studies and the very processes of communication may be viewed as mediators among the disciplines. For as human beings seek to process and structure messages coming from many disciplinary sources in a century of message overload, there must be methodologies which help them to discover structural similarities (and differences) in data, to structure data for immediate or delayed applications, and to employ feedback mechanisms to evaluate, predict and plan message behavior. In addition, messages from various disciplinary contexts must be evaluated from such viewpoints as the rhetorical, aesthetic and ethical.

While communication studies are bound to thrive in an era emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches, we must take care that as the disciplines apply for "adoption," we in speech who have nurtured the communication child also raise her to adulthood and keep her from being violated. Furthermore, it is obvious that we have never quite had this child accepted in her own right by the rest of society. If we had, oral communication competence would now be required, by taxpayers and school "bosses," for every secondary school throughout the country with the same reverence as arithmetic, history, reading, and physical education. For we must remember that regardless of what great advances are made by a discipline in higher education, its growth or demise in public school education is a reflection of the discipline as the public knows it. The recent emphasis, for example, on development of secondary school psychology curricula by the American Psychological Association (a scholarly, university-dominated organization) is in part a response to public awareness of the importance of psychology as a part of general knowledge.

Why has speech communication not earned the public and professional esteem as a requirement in secondary schools? What are our prospects for the future,

given current trends in communication education? Let's look backward for a moment in an attempt to predict the future.

To understand the pattern of communication education (or any field) of education at a given point in time, we must consider: (Figure 1)

1. Who is the learner? For whom was the instruction intended?
2. Who are the teachers? What are their qualifications?
3. What concepts from the discipline are being taught or emphasized?
4. How are the concepts taught? (What are the instructional strategies and media?)
5. In what contexts does the instruction occur?

These components must be considered against the motifs of education and society, i.e., the values, beliefs and goals that dominate the social and political institutions and interrelate with the educational systems of the time.

The Past Scene

If you were to study this "mosaic" of components with respect to speech education in colonial America, the best help would be the book, A History of Speech Education in America,[2] edited by the late Karl Wallace; from it we could fill in most of the pieces from colonial times until about 1925.

What were the dominant themes in society and education in colonial America? The 17th and 18th centuries emphasized learning to serve the church and state; there was a concern with inexpensively providing educational opportunities for everyone. But most important was the fact that education was conducted orally as lectures, recitations, declamations, disputations, dramatic dialogues, etc. Orators in college received a great deal of honor. In the last half of the 18th century, the literary and debating societies flourished, first with original speeches and later with planned and written speeches. Thus, anyone who went

to school received instruction primarily through oral means and "fed back" his learning (albeit largely through recitation) by means of oral language.

What concepts were emphasized in speech education? By 1642 Ramistic theory dominated rhetoric. The important thing for us to remember is that Ramus considered style and delivery to be split from invention and arrangement; style was an ornament to logic. By 1730, the emphasis in colonial America on the classics brought a return to the rhetoric of Cicero, where style was again important and where persuasion with its five parts (invention, disposition, elocution, memory and pronunciation) were concerned with influence upon an audience. Another movement at this time was the Belles Lettres or the "rhetoric of style." From about 1750 to the end of the century, we see the growth of the elocution movement which was to have the greatest impact on the initial speech education movement in this country.

During the nineteenth century, the public schools emphasized a common education for all. Factors mentioned by Borchers and Wagner[3] which were part of the nineteenth century influence upon education were: 1) the political equalization that arose with the extension of the right to vote, thus influenceing the emphasis on training for citizenship; 2) the growth of manufacturing which resulted in the rise of cities with diversified social and ethnic patterns; 3) tax-supported school systems which eliminated church control over public education; and 4) the growth of American literature and expansion of libraries for the public. In education, the child was viewed as something more than sinful and in need of moral training. Science was introduced into the curriculum. Children learned to read silently for meaning, and reading took on new emphasis. Definitions and language usage were important in speaking and writing to preserve proper English. While oral reading, enunciation and pronunciation were important,

discussion and conversation appeared as part of the curriculum and indicated a trend "toward speech training in a broader and more practical sense."[4]

By 1890, according to Borchers and Wagner, "rhetoric was offered in almost every school, but we cannot classify this as speech training since there remained the tendency to emphasize written rather than oral composition."[5] The century which saw the appearance of silent reading also witnessed the rise of debate as an educational activity, which still remains today one of the most prevalent and accepted forms of secondary speech activity.

What were the concepts taught in the schools and who was teaching them? It is important to realize that the content makers in the field of rhetoric at this time had moved from the artistic emphasis in the elocutionary movement to the scientific; this interest gave rise to the physiological aspects of speech, to acoustic analysis and other aspects of the speech sciences of the 20th century. Teachers of the time were often itinerant elocutionists who saw entertainment values rather than educational values in the study of speaking.

At the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth came expansion in courses and the rise of departments in the structures of higher education. Speech education in the twentieth century was very much within the secondary school curriculum, particularly in the form of debate and dramatics, which flourished as extracurricular activities.

To reflect what seemed to be the growth of a separate discipline in the secondary schools, in 1914 speech formed its own organization by splitting off from the National Council of Teachers of English; professionally it was recognized that speech had educational goals different from those of the English teachers. Speaking in 1915 to the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking, James O'Neill said:

> Non-academic and extra-curricular triumphs and victories must not be the most prized distinctions. The platform and the stage must give way to the study and the classroom as the scenes of our best and most important work and our richest and most enduring rewards.[6]

It is ironic that in 1975, some of us interested in secondary education are still striving to get speech out of the trophy case and into the classroom!

Who were the teachers of speech in the early 20th century? In 1920, the association was asking that teachers of speech have as high a quality of training as teachers of other subjects. (We shall see in a few moments that this goal has been far from achieved in our profession.) While state associations worked diligently for teacher standards, it was (and still is, in some places) possible for teachers certified in English to teach speech with only three semester hours in any phase of speech. Who in 1920 were the recipients in this new era of prosperity in speech education? According to Culley and Seabury, in 1920

> A United States Bureau of Education survey on North Central Association schools commented, "it is doubtless contrary to general impression that nearly one-third of the schools make definite offerings" in public speaking. . .. As Andrew T. Weaver observed:
>
> > A decade ago it seemed doubtful whether the importance of training in speech would ever be widely recognized. The situation is quite different today. There has come a growing conviction among school men everywhere that some sort of organized class work in Speech should be introduced into the high school curriculum. . ..We stand on the threshold of a new day.[7]

As we shall see in a few moments, for various reasons, we never crossed the threshold with respect to speech offerings and requirements in the secondary schools.

The sciences of speech flourished and culminated in the speech correction movement which led to the formation of departments for remedial speech work. By 1926, only twelve short years after the split from English, a new association was formed--the American Academy of Speech Correction, forerunner of the American Speech and Hearing Association. Ten years after that, in 1936, the American Educational Theatre Association was formed, leaving the young Speech Association of America to deal primarily with public speaking, forensics, the speech sciences, and something in communication happening from the impact of the social sciences. This "something" was later to demand its own territory in the Fifties in the form of the National Society for the Study of Communication (now the International Communication Association). In essence, our territorial splits were not serving the needs of those in secondary or even small college speech education who were asked to teach forensics, theatre, phonetics, public speaking, group discussion and still keep up with new research in the communication sciences. Small wonder that one of SCA's largest divisions is still "theatre." The more we disintegrated professionally, both by content and by state-national liaisons, the more the English teachers and others became convinced that we had little worth teaching.

It was probably prophetic that Giles Wilkeson Gray, writing of the growth of the speech field to 1890, said: "The thirty years were a period of transition. Will it be said that by the end of the next thirty years a period of disintegration had set in?"[8]

The Contemporary Scene

Where are we now with respect to our mosaic? Let's look first at forces in contemporary society which appear to be having major impacts on education in general.

First, there are attempts to temper the effects of technological advances with humanistic emphases. There are the problems of human worth and dignity in a world where technology often intervenes between the individual and the decisions which affect him or her. While technology saves us time and permits us to concentrate on higher orders of thinking, we are faced with some new educational dilemmas. One example for the math educators is: to what extent will the introduction of mini-calculators in the early grades inhibit the development of students' higher level mathematical skills?

Other examples: we know that mass media have permitted greater participation by people in events of the world--wars, human disasters, strikes, etc. In one sense, technology has equalized knowledge levels and made everyone somewhat smarter (despite recent theories that mass media viewing has also contributed to decreased functional literacy scores). But, has mass communication also made us more immune to violence, changed our tolerance for in-humane-ness, decreased our sensitivity levels? If so, how can these effects be balanced through affective education? We see in education trends toward "confluent curricula," or attempts to blend the cognitive and technological aspects of knowledge with education for values. Goal statements in almost all state education documents indicate increased emphasis on human relations and human values.

A second force in contemporary society with an impact on education is the rapid fractionation of the nuclear and extended family, with a re-designation

of sex roles in society. We are all familiar with the statistics on divorce rates, sequential marriages, numbers of single women who are now legal heads of households, the social acceptance of new living patterns, and a concern for the "senior citizens" who must survive without benefit of the extended family. Concurrently there is the search for new sources of human intimacy and the shattering and rebuilding of self concepts formerly connected with sexual and social roles. The applause when Edith Bunker "puts down" the chauvinistic Archie may be evidence that mass media is making such social movements happen faster and with more widespread effects than at any other time in history.

Alternative family styles have placed greater demands on education institutions for such innovations as extended day care, continuing education, and education in contexts outside the classroom. There is concern in the curriculum for teaching people to cope with change and for helping them to achieve greater productivity during the various stages--birth through death. There is a concern for copability being developed in the very early life stages. A good example is a program in Boston called BEEP (Brookline Early Education Project, recently described in the Sunday New York Times)[9], where professional educators are helping parents in the home to understand early child development and accomplish with a minimum of anxiety the various tasks of parenting.

A third force having enormous impact on education is economic pressures in part related to rapid depletion of natural resources. The natural impulse to "tighten the belts" when jobs run low and inflation runs high interacting with behavioristic movements in education are reflected in the quests for educational stability. The accountability movement with its emphases on performance, results, management by objectives, systems approaches and data-based decision-making has spawned the trend toward competency-based education. We

see state legislatures demanding results, state education departments such as those in New York and Florida mandating disciplines and institutions to "spell out" competencies and learning objectives; we see states banding together into consortia such as the Multi-State Consortium on Competency Based Teacher Education to pool resources for educational decision-making.

But the movement which has also gained force and which may seem paradoxical in view of the reported oversupply of available teachers in relation to available positions is the movement of "professionalism" in education. With the rise of unionism among teachers and increased emphases by the National Education Association and others on teacher welfare, there have also been backlashes against accountability. There is an increasing concern for who is going to govern teacher education, licensing, and the selection of educational content and goals, and a rise of umbrella organizations such as the Associated Organizations for Teacher Education (of which SCA is a member) attempting to cut across disciplines through areas of common concern. There is a definite emphasis on associations as representative of educational concerns. For example, the current attempts of Senator Mondale to draft a bill on teacher centering involves representatives from various organizations with differing views on the issue of who should govern teacher education. Another example: the guidelines used by NCATE teams ask whether the institution preparing teachers has utilized the guidelines of the various professional organizations in the disciplines in which their graduates will teach.

While the scholarly, non-utilitarian types of organizations may be losing member interest, those with professional and political concerns related to the discipline and its applications tend to be the targets of increased interest.

A fourth force, and perhaps the most potent in altering society and education, results from changes in work styles. Again, as mass media create new awarenesses for human possibilities, people tend to aim high, and few wish to do the menial work. A new book by Barbara Garson, All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work,[10] pictures workers' attempts to cope with tedium and the attempts of management to keep workers from gaining growth and independence through the exercise of higher level skills.

Recognizing that a person living in the next decade is likely to change jobs as many as nine times in a life span, the career education movement is an attempt to expand awareness of the "world of work" below the high school or college level into the elementary schools where the meaning of work is taking on new emphasis. In addition, with the emphasis on utilitarianism in society and education, there is concern for including those curricula which will have impact on preparation for work functions. In fact, we are told that career education efforts in the National Institute for Education will be aimed next year at transferrable skills, i.e., centering school learning around those skills likely to make people more employable as they alter their careers.

Educational and economic theorists concerned with career preparation have attempted to classify jobs on such dimensions as whether they are concerned with data, people or things, or whether they are machine-, service- or human knowledge-based or by the kinds of personalities which tend to fill them.[11] Many of these viewpoints have great implications for contributions from communication education.

Having just described some of the factors influencing society and education today, let's look at communication education. What has happened to our field since Karl Wallace finished editing History of Speech Education

in America? What are some of the events occuring in the profession and through professional associations to fit the field into the contemporary scene? (Figure 2)

First, as those of us familiar with higher education and concerned with public school education know, communication secondary curricula appear to be at least thirty years behind the times. Probably, in part, because of the professional fragmentation at a critical time in the development of the discipline (described earlier), speech never got to be a requirement in most state education systems, but remained as an elective, typically under English.

While in higher education, communication theory and research have been applied to such areas as information processing, interpersonal and governmental communication, marriage and family, geriatrics, and the human spectrum--birth through death--in secondary schools, the latest (1972-73) data from the National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that of the schools offering speech-related courses (speech, diction, public speaking, drama, debate, radio-t.v.-film), the preponderance of courses are in speech and public speaking, with the greatest increases occurring since 1970 in mass communication.[12] While content varies according to the teacher, and it is difficult to tell from labels what is being taught, it is safe to say that most curricula do not emphasize applications of communication theory to life situations, and certainly secondary students are not generally led to see relationships of content to communication-related fields.

More alarming is the question of how many students are being reached through speech or communication courses. While we acknowledge that many English classes include speech components, only about 57% of the secondary schools in the

United States, according to the same NCES data, appear to offer speech communication courses.

While most states report that it is still possible for teachers to teach speech having taken six to twelve hours in the subject, there are encouraging signs in several states--Florida, California, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Washington, that speech associations have begun to make an impact in up-grading the teaching requirements and curriculum.

Instructional goals have varied considerably from state to state, but there is increased concern among most of the states for competency-based communication education and for assessment procedures.

What measures are being taken in the profession to contemporize content, contexts, instruction, and personnel related to communication education? In relation to content, there is a greater concern for closing the gap between communication research and public school curricula. SCA, which administers the ERIC module of the Reading and Communication Skills Clearinghouse, is disseminating materials in mass communication, non-verbal communication, communication and careers, conflict resolution, intercultural communication, etc. In addition, there are a handful of new secondary textbooks which reflect the new emphases on interpersonal and applied communication. We must not neglect the question of what it is our discipline can contribute to other disciplines, notably those concerned with educational research. Until recently, classroom communication was investigated by educational researchers; recently, several people in our profession--Bob Kibler at Florida State University, Betty Haslett of the University of Delaware, and others--have contributed to journals in education. One of the fastest growing courses in universities

today is that dealing with communication for classroom teachers. We have even begun to talk about a possible role for the secondary speech teacher as a communication resource person who helps people from various disciplines with classroom and non-academic communication problems. One of the most promising developments is that through SCA's move to the Washington area, interactions with the National Institute for Education are likely to increase the definition of basic skills beyond reading and math to include speaking and listening. As this occurs, there are likely to be many influential results for research and development.

In relation to personnel who teach speech communication and related courses, very little is currently known about their pre-service and in-service preparation. Under the sponsorship of the Educational Policies Board of the SCA, a study is being conducted by William Davidson of the University of Wisconsin to determine the national picture on selection procedures and other aspects of preparation for those teaching speech. In efforts to up-grade those programs in teacher preparation institutions which prepare teachers of speech and of theatre, guidelines were prepared by a joint committee of SCA and ATA, and are currently being used extensively by NCATE teams in their evaluations of institutions.[15] One of the promising aspects of the document is the service component which recommends that all teachers be prepared in areas of speech communication and theatre. Another document being prepared by the same task force, which will have a preliminary draft at the Houston convention, is a description of guidelines for generating competencies in communication and theatre for all teachers, for those licensed to teach speech, theatre, and mass communication, and for specialists within those areas. To meet the futuristic demands for differentiated staffing, the document

will enable those who prepare and hire teachers to put together competency modules in numerous combinations from the various areas of the communication arts and sciences. Since these documents have the blessings of two national associations--SCA and ATA--and hopefully dissemination within state organizations, they have a high likelihood of being used by agencies looking to professional organizations for guidance.

In the area of instructional procedures, one of our deficits has been an understanding of the stages at which functional communication skills develop. The initial goals of a national competencies project supported by Axe-Houghton funds and administered through the SCA is resulting in a taxonomy of developmental skills and related instructional goals of the various grade levels. There is a need, of course, for new strategies which will individualize communication education with respect to career needs, contexts in which learning occurs, individual communication problems, and socio-cultural differences. A notable deficit in our field is in the production of non-print media to describe those concepts derived from research and instruction.

Within the area of evaluation, the national office gets hundreds of requests for instruments to evaluate speaking and listening in academic and job contexts. Through initial discussions with the director of the National Assessment for Educational Progress, SCA is attempting to get speaking and listening competence of school children assessed in the same ways that writing, reading, social studies and other areas have been assessed. In doing so, we are going to have to delineate those competencies worth assessing (perhaps the transferable skills in the words of NIE), and the concomittant evaluation procedures.

The Bicentennial Youth Debates, which are being administered through the SCA under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities,

has already reached 9,000 secondary schools and schools of higher education. We can only hope that this will help speech make inroads into the secondary schools and hopefully with a revised notion of forensics. A promising trend came out of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics held last September at Sedalia, Colorado as a joint project of the American Forensic Association and the SCA in the form of many resolutions including this one:

> Forensics should develop students' communicative abilities, especially the abilities to analyze controversies, select and evaluate evidence; to construct and refute arguments; and to understand and use the values of the audience as warrants for belief.[14]

If we remain consolidated as a profession--which may mean at least some disciplinary and geographical political mergers on issues of mutual interest--we may indeed cross Andrew Weaver's "threshold of a new day." If not, it is entirely possible that the reading teachers and the social studies teachers who recognize the values of communication education may swallow up what we think we teach best into their own curricula.

The Future Scene

If the futurists are right, we are going to see data-based decision-making in most of our public institutions, functionalism used as the basis for planning, new patterns of family life, work and leisure, education occurring in non-academic as well as academic contexts with shared governance of teacher education, and increased state responsiblity for child development. But the most profound impact on society and education (assuming the planet survives) will be the advent of what Aldo Visalberghi called in a recent paper delivered at a meeting of the American Council on Education, "the learning society."[15] Visalberghi emphasized the fact that we are already moving toward forms of recurrent or sequential education at the post-secondary level and that there

are shorter cycles of education developing partly replacing longer cycles. Cummulative records sum up credits from life experiences or learning modules as well as those accumulated in traditional university settings. There will be an emphasis on practical experience with "time off" for working before, during or after schooling occurs. He says:

> An additional amount of labour for unskilled and menial work may be furnished by the practice of always starting working careers from the bottom (assembly lines, cleaning, etc.), everyone moving later to higher professional levels, assisted by a highly flexible system of recurrent education.

He goes on to say:

> The difference between high-status and low-status jobs could best, to an increased extent, become a matter of different stages in each individual's life rather than of early and definitive class distinction.[16]

Everyone in such a model is a part of the "learning society," because he or she is constantly learning and striving upward to go as far as possible. Nobody in such a society would be burdened down for a lifetime by the tedium of menial labor.

As we conjecture a possible "learning society," can you imagine some of the implications for communication education of the future? What if we had information from a task analysis of jobs according to communication dimensions? Some jobs require high levels of decision-making, problem solving, information giving, etc. What if jobs were computerized according to communication dimensions? What if we understood structural similarity among jobs on the basis of communication dimensions and could teach communication skills at the secondary level related to career and communication preferences? What if the processes that we now understand as intrapersonal communication were applied to the processes of helping individuals find congruence among job preferences, job intentions, and level of aspiration? What if education reflected the emphasis in contemporary society

on oral rather than written information processing, and every person at every stage in the learning society were required to demonstrate oral communication competence?

While the momentum gathered at the turn of the century was slowed down by professional disintegration and a re-emphasis on reading and writing skills, I believe that in the current scene of emphasis on utilitarianism, on efforts to merge behavioristic and humanistic philosophies, and in face of the new communication patterns to meet changing work and social styles, we in our profession will probably be a prominent force in the 21st century. Perhaps we will once again be able to say as James O'Neill said in 1916,

> So for the first time we stand united; we have reached the first position necessary for proper professional advance. Our point of view, then, is that of professional solidarity, united for the advancement of whatsoever things are right. Do not misunderstand me to mean that we are all agreed on what is right. No such calamity is possible. I feel confident that we shall be spared the blight of unanimity of opinion for some time to come. But I am also confident that we have here a unanimity of loyalty to the profession as a profession--an esprit de corps embodied, and made potent therefore on a national scope, for the first time in history. Such is the point at which we stand.[17]

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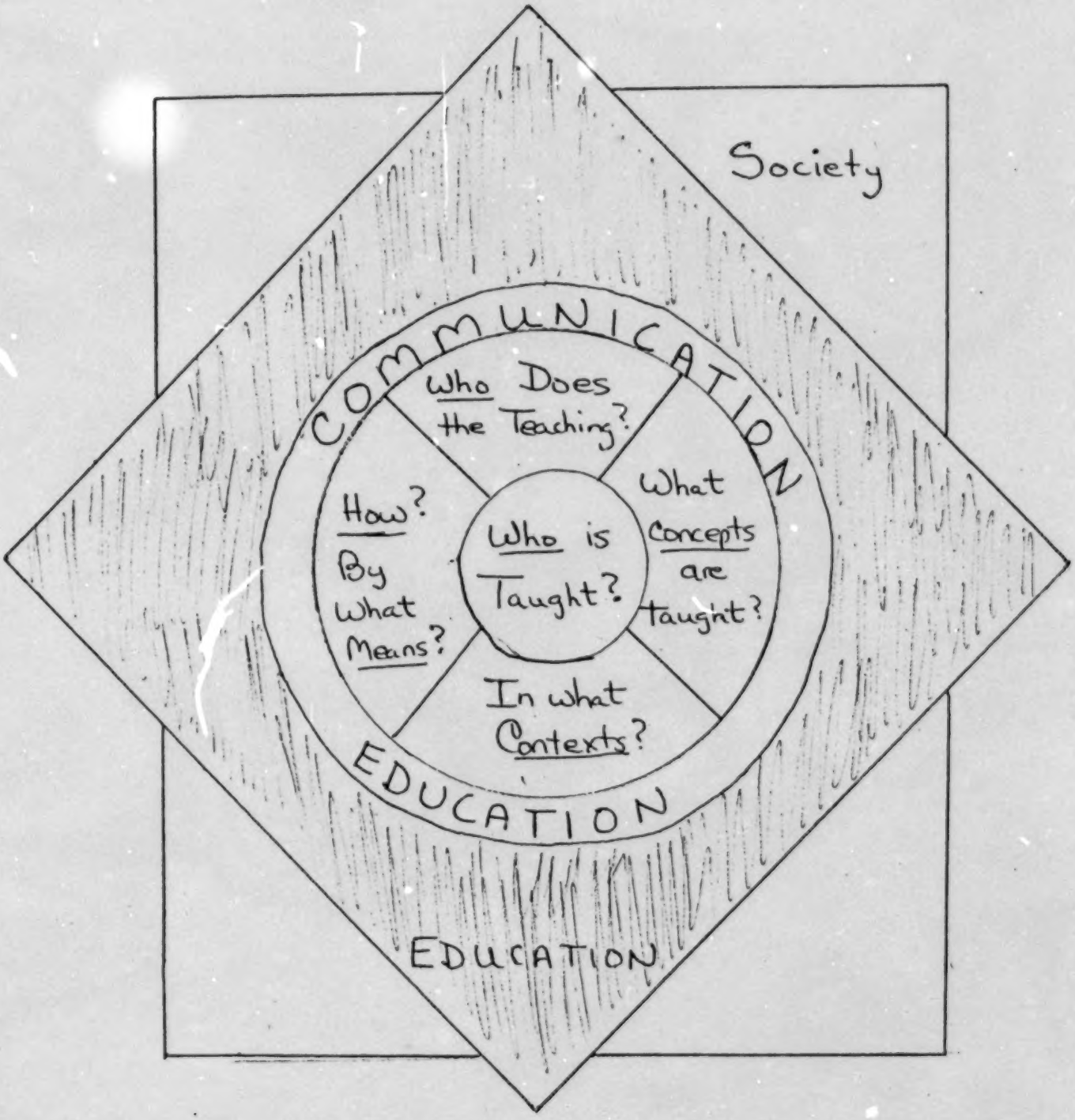
Society
COMMUNICATION
Who Does the Teaching?
How? By What Means?
Who is Taught?
What Concepts are Taught?
In what Contexts?
EDUCATION
EDUCATION

Figure 1

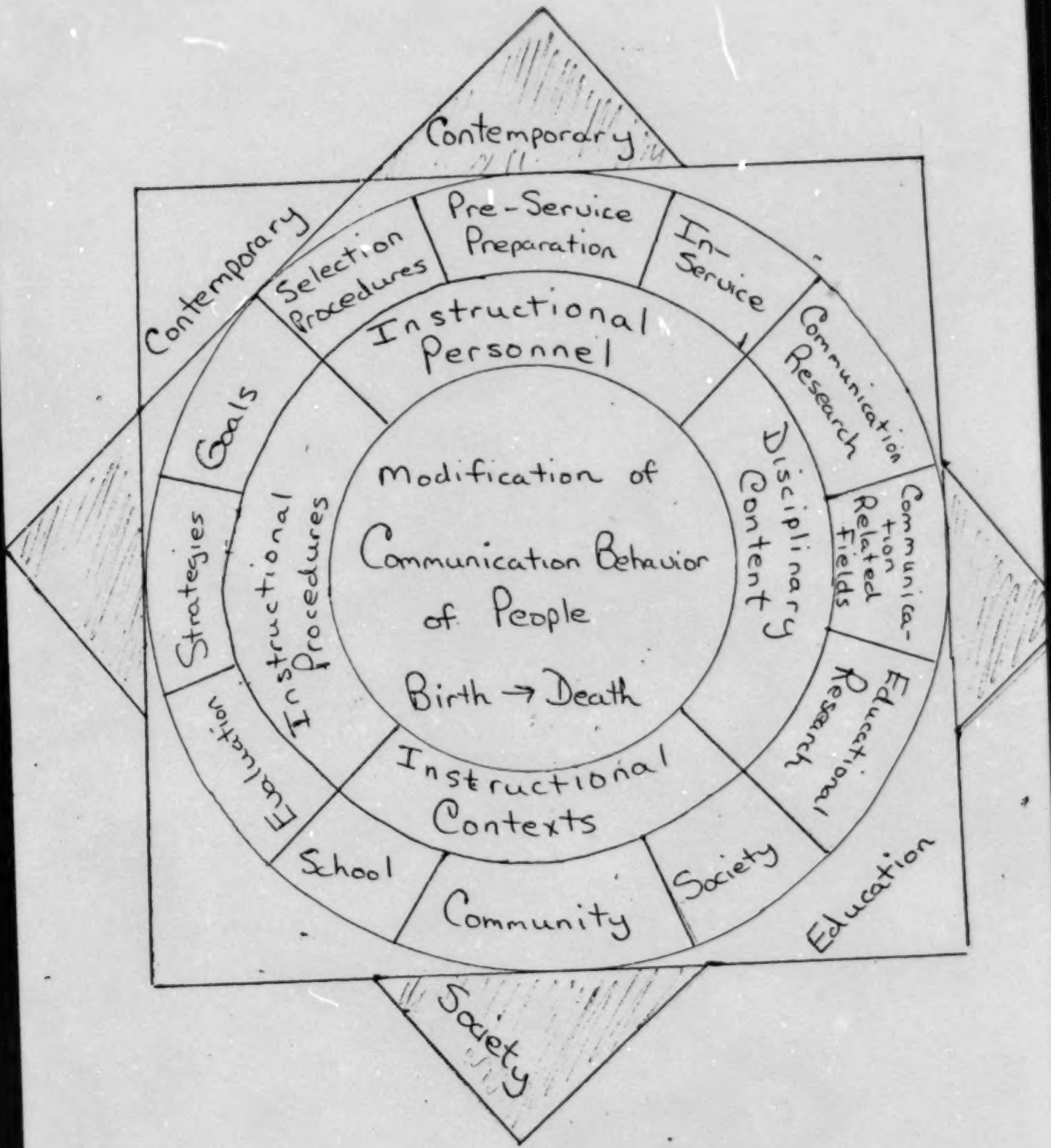
Contemporary
Contemporary
Selection Procedures
Pre-Service Preparation
In-Service
Communication Research
Communication Related Fields
Educational Research
Society
Education
Goals
Strategies
Instructional Procedures
Evaluation
Instructional Personnel
Modification of Communication Behavior of People
Birth → Death
Disciplinary Content
Instructional Contexts
School
Community
Society

Figure 2